

Message Text

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17

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-10 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 AGR-05

/093 W

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R 040906Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0485

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 0190

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDGV PINT GV

SUBJECT: TOURE, ON TOUR OF INTERIOR, ATTACKS BLACK MARKET
AND SMUGGLING

REF: CONAKRY 141

1. FROM JAN 19 - FEB 3 PRESIDENT TOURE HAS VISITED AT LEAST
EIGHT MAJOR INTERIOR TOWNS AND CITIES TO SEEK SUPPORT FOR, AND
CONTROL CRITICISM OF, HIS RECENT DOMESTIC ECONOMIC MEASURES
(REFTEL). SPEECHES GIVEN PARTLY IN FRENCH, PARTLY IN
"NATIONAL" LANGUAGES, AND REPETITIVE RADIO BROADCASTS HAVE
ATTRACTED WIDESPREAD ATTENTION IN CONAKRY AS WELL. MAIN POINTS
HAVE BEEN:

A. BLACK MARKETEERS AND SMUGGLERS ARE CAUSE OF SHORTAGES
AND HIGH PRICES FOR FEW AVAILABLE CONSUMER GOODS.

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B. GOVT WILL TAKE SEVERAL STEPS TO ELIMINATE TRAFFICKING,

INCLUDING JAILING OF CORRUPT OFFICIALS (TOURE HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED THAT REGIONAL SECRETARIES GENERAL IN TOWNS OF TELEMELE AND DINGUIRAYE HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, AND OFFICIALS IN KOUROUSSA ARE ALSO IN JAIL) AND SEIZURE OF BLACK MARKET GOODS BY LOCAL MILITIA. IN KANKAN TOURE EVEN INVITED PEOPLE TO KILL SMUGGLERS AND OPERATORS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT WHO CHARGE MORE THAN THE GOVT-FIXED PRICES FOR THEIR GOODS AND SERVICES.

C. ECONOMIC SITUATION, THOUGH SERIOUS, WAS EVEN WORSE UNDER COLONIALISM, WHEN NO GUINEANS HAD SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF MONEY.

2. THERE ARE CONFLICTING REPORTS AS TO LOCAL REACTION IN INTERIOR TO SPEECHES, BUT TOURE'S PROMISES TO LOWER PRICES BY GOVT FIAT SEEM TO ELICIT MOST POSITIVE CROWD REACTIONS.

3. EMBOFFS HAVE DISCUSSED THIS CAMPAIGN WITH VARIETY OF GUINEAN OFFICIALS AND FOREIGN OBSERVERS. ONE WELL-PLACED US-EDUCATED GUINEAN IN MINISTRY OF DOMAIN OF EXCHANGES CLAIMS WITH APPARENT CONVICTION THAT PRESENT GUINEAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IS MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO FEED COUNTRY AND EVEN PROVIDE REVENUE FROM EXPORTS, IF MASSIVE SMUGGLING INTO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES CAN BE STOPPED. RUMORS OF INVOLVEMENT IN BLACK MARKET BY HIGH OFFICIALS, EVEN MINISTERS, ARE OFTEN HEARD IN CONAKRY. MANY OBSERVERS EXPECT FOLLOWING MEASURES IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS OR MONTHS: PURLICIZED DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AGAINST AT LEAST A FEW BLACK MARKETEERS, JAILING OF ADDITIONAL CORRUPT OFFICIALS, AND REMOVAL OF CERTAIN MINISTERS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN BLACK MARKET.

4. CAMPAIGN AGAINST BLACK MARKETEERS AND TOURE'S OCCASIONAL PUBLIC REFERENCES TO ALLEGED COUNTERFEITING OF CURRENCY HAVE CAUSED SOME SPECULATION THAT GOG MAY EVEN ISSUE A NEW CURRENCY. INDIVIDUALS WITH LARGE SUMS OF ILLEGALLY OBTAINED SYLIS WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY EXCHANGING THEM. THERE HAS BEEN NO SPECIFIC EVIDENCE THAT SUCH A MOVE IS NOW UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION, BUT SIMILAR ACTION IN EARLY 1973 WAS DONE WITH VIRTUALLY NO ADVANCE NOTICE.

5. COMMENT: IF THE BLACK MARKET IS ELIMINATED FOR EVEN A FEW
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WEEKS, THERE WILL BE MAJOR SHORTAGES OF VIRTUALLY ALL CONSUMER GOODS, AND HIDING OF CURRENT STOCKS BY BLACK MARKETEERS IN CONAKRY AND ELSEWHERE HAS ALREADY CAUSED SOME NEW DIFFICULTIES FOR CONSUMERS. ALMOST ALL OF IMPORTED CONSUMER ITEMS IN GUINEAN MARKETS ARE ILLEGALLY OBTAINED AND SOLD WITHOUT LICENSES. AT BEGINNING OF CURRENT TOUR TOURE SEEMED TO BE CLAIMING THAT NEW SOURCES OF HARD CURRENCY, SUCH AS THE RECENT BAUXITE TAX AND AID FROM ARAB COUNTRIES, WOULD ALLOW GOVERNMENT TO

IMPORT CONSUMER GOODS NEEDED BY POPULATION. BUT IN RECENT DAYS THIS APPROACH HAS BEEN DROPPED IN FAVOR OF ONLY CONTROLS ON PRICES.

6. CYNICAL, OR OPTIMISTIC, OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT CURRENT ANTI-BLACK MARKET CAMPAIGN WILL INEVITABLY RUN OUT OF STEAM IN A FEW WEEKS, WITH LITTLE LONG-TERM EFFECT ON ECONOMY. ONLY IF CURRENT REFORMS TOUCH MINISTERS OR OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH A SIGNIFICANT PERSONAL FOLLOWING COULD THERE BE A DIRECT THREAT TO THE STABILITY OF THE REGIME. AGAIN, THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO REPORTS OF ANY MEN INSIDE GUINEAN CAPABLE OR WILLING AT PRESENT TO OPPOSE TOURE'S PROGRAMS.

MACDONALD

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